

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2017

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/17/3172412

1 Ferncroft Avenue, Ruislip, HA4 9JE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Walsh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 2601/APP/2016/4367, dated 25 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey side extension at 1 Ferncroft Avenue, Ruislip, HA4 9JE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2610/APP/2016/4367, dated 25 February 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 1FA/P200.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached home with a hipped roof which has been extended to the side and rear and displays pleasing elevations including curved bay windows and curved corners. There are similar properties in the locality and they all come together to create an established locality of residential suburban character and an attractive neighbourhood with some sense of spaciousness. The appeal property is in a corner position on a triangular plot and has an undeveloped triangular area to its side with a front width of about 5.3 metres tapering for a depth of some 75.m to the rear to zero width. It is all located behind a substantial and not unattractive brick wall with a pair of solid garden gates centrally located. The appeal scheme is to 'fill
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in' this triangle with a flat roof kitchen extension to be constructed behind an increased height of brick garden wall with (non-functional) gates retained on the front elevation. The extension would run along the boundary and have no windows to front or side, relying on drawing light from the existing appeal property.

4. The Council is concerned that the scale and design of the scheme, and particularly its width when added to the existing side extension, would be detrimental to the streetscene and the visual qualities of the existing property. The Decision Notice highlights that the combined extensions would be more than 100% of the original house. I appreciate why fears would be raised with this overall width of extended development and its running right up to the boundary and I acknowledge the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document HDAS: *Residential Extensions* (SPD) which would certainly strongly point to a limit much less than this to ensure that an extension was subordinate.
5. However this is an unusual case. In my opinion the scheme offers an effective design solution to the aim of seeking to make use of a somewhat wasted area of land. This is through the means of 'hiding' the new floorspace behind what would appear as a brick wall, albeit a tall one, seemingly separating front from rear gardens. One is thus not getting roof pitches or crowns showing and neither would there be large openings in the front elevation. In adopting this simple approach the main front elevation of the house would remain just that – the principal feature. The house would not read as though it extended across the plot. The design would also help to prevent any sense of undue proximity or terracing with the dwelling alongside and would at the same time leave an open area at first floor above to continue the sense of spaciousness found locally. The scene is also helped by the very generous width of the highway frontage of the garden with the triangular plot shape and the set back of the dwelling giving a greater sense of space than the reality towards the rear of the curtilage.
6. In summary the scheme would be suitably subordinate to the building as whole and in this instance would be an aesthetically fitting way to provide a useful addition to the internal space available to occupiers. The design would harmonise appropriately with its host property and sit subtly in the streetscene.
7. I therefore conclude that the development sought would not lead to visual detriment to the appeal property and the wider locality. It would not run contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012) and Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Saved UDP Policies (November 2012). These policies, like the SPD, share common themes of seeking to protect or enhance the character and appearance of buildings and their neighbourhood, to ensure harmonious development and the safeguarding of local distinctiveness. I acknowledge that the SPD provides some specific guidance on front extensions but it cannot be expected to cover every eventuality, must be looked at pragmatically and flexibly on suitable occasions, and this instance the appeal scheme would meet the aesthetic objectives of the document.
8. I have taken into account all representations made and I should add that for the reasons given in the officer's report I agree with the Council that the scheme would not represent unneighbourly development or lead to an inadequate size of retained garden area for the appeal property.

Conditions

9. The Council suggests the standard commencement condition along with the requirement for materials to match the existing building. I agree this latter condition would be appropriate in the interests of visual amenity. I also agree that there should also be a condition that works are to be carried out in accordance with listed, approved, plan; to provide certainty.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly the appeal is allowed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR